



# WATERSHED WATCH

July 3, 2024 | Q2 Newsletter

Upper Dry Creek

## *Announcement*

- July 15<sup>th</sup> WWBWC Monthly Board Meeting 7:00pm-8:30pm
- August 17<sup>th</sup> Watershed Stewardship Workshop
- October 26<sup>th</sup> *RiverFest Gala* 5:00pm-8:00pm
- Check out *Trail Cam Tuesdays* on our Facebook Page!

## *Inside This Issue*

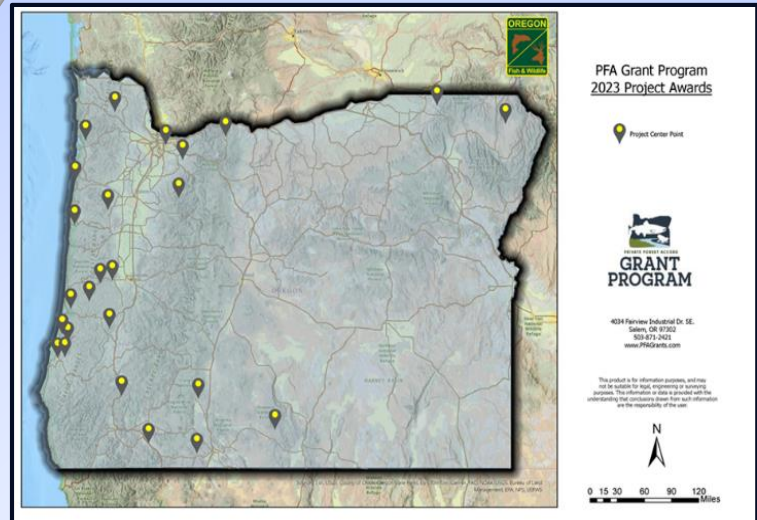
- North Fork Project
- RiverFest Gala
- WWBWC Donates Aspen Trees
- Stream Rehab
- Charting The Course
- Other Upcoming Events



# North Fork Walla Walla River Floodplain Restoration Project

The North Fork Walla Walla River was severely impacted by the flood of 2020, the largest on record, and caused extensive reduction of riverine habitat for steelhead and bull trout, both classified as Threatened via the Endangered Species Act. WWBWC is successfully implementing a 5-mile holistic floodplain and habitat complexity restoration project of the North Fork over a 5-year period. The project location is identified in various natural resource management documents and designated as critical habitat and a priority area for restoration actions. The WWBWC philosophy of restoring, enhancing, and protecting riverine systems involves understanding ecosystem interconnectivity and concentrating actions beyond the wetted channel into the riparian area and across the floodplain.

The WWBWC successfully implemented two initial restoration phases in 2022 and 2023 with financial support from the Bonneville Power Administration and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. Phase one involved the reconnection of 15 surface springs in 2022. Phase two involved the restoration of a mile of riverine habitat. WWBWC was recently awarded \$819,209 by the Private Forestry Act grant program administered by the Private Forest Accord Grant Program for Phase 3 to restore an additional mile of river in 2024. This new program is a competitive grant opportunity that attracted 75 applicants, with 25 receiving grant dollars. The WWBWC was awarded the second largest overall grant award and is just one of two entities receiving awards on the eastern side of the state, which is quite an accomplishment for a small non-profit organization. WWBWC restoration actions will benefit a variety of natural resources and interests to handle future flooding events more effectively.



## Happy 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council!

Yes, it is true, the WWBWC has turned 30. In celebration of that notable milestone, the 30th Anniversary River Fest Gala has been set for October 26th, 2024, and you're invited! Join the WWBWC Board of Directors and staff for an evening of amazing food, fun entertainment, tantalizing silent auctions, enjoyable door prizes, a delicious raffle, and even an enticing wine auction.

Festivities will be held at the historic Marcus Whitman in Walla Walla. The evening will start with a social hour at 5:00pm, and will be followed by a culinary experience prepared by the talented chef of The Marc Restaurant. The menu you ask? Check it out below. Can we accommodate special diets, you question? Of course we can and with the talent at The Marc, you know it will be amazing.



### THE MARCUS WHITMAN

#### STARTER

Charcuterie Board  
*regional artisan cheese, cured meats, seasonal fruit, olive medley, mustard, nuts, crostini*

#### SALAD

Italian Chop Salad  
*romaine, chickpeas, cherry tomato, provolone, red onion, olives, pepperoncini, red wine vinaigrette*

#### ENTREES

Roasted Beef Sirloin with Green Peppercorn Sauce  
Seared King Salmon with Smokey Beurre Blanc  
*hazelnuts*

#### SIDES

Whipped Mashed Potato  
Sautéed Seasonal Vegetables

#### DESSERT

Seasonal Fruit Cobbler



All proceeds from the event will go to the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council to help implement the critical habitat & restoration, inventory & assessments, outreach & education, irrigation efficiency, and managed aquifer recharge projects in the basin. Tickets are on sale now at <https://wwbwc.harressgiving.org/events?page=1>. Buy two for yourself and that someone special in your life or sponsor a table for your family and friends. If you're feeling especially generous, you can host a table for WWBWC agency partners.

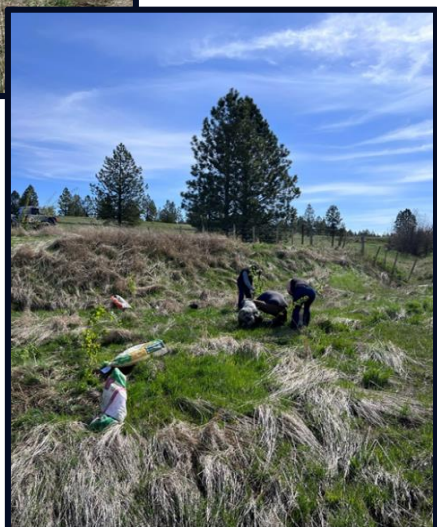
For questions or if you have special dietary needs, please contact Wendy Harris at 541-938-2170.



## WWBWC Donates Aspen Trees to Support Dry Creek Headwaters Restoration

The Watershed Council donated 40 aspen trees to a landowner whose property is situated at the headwaters of Dry Creek. This effort is part of a larger project funded to implement beaver dam analog structures on the landowner's property. These structures are positioned below the upland ponds to mitigate seasonal stream channel downcutting and enhance water retention.

The project will also extend to an adjacent property, where similar structures will be built to curtail sediment movement and maintain higher water levels in the landscape for extended periods. This effort underscores our commitment to sustainable watershed management and community collaboration.



## Charting The Course



This summer the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council is “*Charting the Course*” to a healthier and more sustainable watershed. For thirty years the WWBWC staff have been funding critical ecological projects in the basin with funds secured through competitive grants. As costs go up and we see more and more needs across our basin and others, securing funding has become even more challenging and we need your support.

Each WWBWC board and staff member will chart their course by serving as ship captains in a friendly competition to see who can raise the most money for the WWBWC’s mission to enhance, restore, and protect the basin’s watershed. To sponsor your favorite WWBWC captain, visit [Donate \(wwbwc.org\)](https://www.wwbwc.org). Additionally, watch for our social media posts, as our “captains” highlight some of their favorite WWBWC projects from over the years.

## Stream Rehab Continues in Couse Creek

In July, a field team from Anabran Solutions will place additional wood structures into the stream channel of Couse Creek at River Mile 4, near Kinnear Road. In a portion of the stream lacking streamside trees and shrubs, the new log jams will slow flow and spread water to soak up the floodplain sponge. The project will improve conditions for steelhead, which historically spawned there, while also reducing the impacts of flood and drought events on the watershed and adjacent land.

This habitat project is part of a broader effort to enhance Couse Creek, which is a tributary to the Walla Walla River



near Milton-Freewater. In 2017, OWEB funded a Couse Creek watershed assessment that identified high-functioning areas and others that would benefit from restoration actions. The Watershed Council partnered with Couse Creek landowners to remove two fish passage barriers and is now working with an upstream landowner to improve habitat.



The creek is fed by springs and rain/snow in the Blue Mountains. Much of Couse Creek flows through an established canopy of riparian trees, which provide shade and log jams important for instream habitat. Previous revegetation efforts in the open areas of the stream have had mixed results due to the simplified channel that allows water to quickly flow downstream without encountering structures forcing it to slow down, carve pools, and drop out streambed material. The new log jams in Couse Creek are permeable structures that aim to restore the natural river processes that support streamside vegetation, overhead cover for fish, side channel habitat, and cool, clean water for wildlife and humans alike.

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